

INTRODUCTION OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL HERMAN BEERMAN LECTURE

CURT STERN, PH.D.

Ladies and gentlemen, I feel very honored that I am to give the Herman Beerman Lecture. It is very unusual, in my experience, that the present generation honors someone who still belongs to it by giving his name to a lectureship. More frequently we honor distinguished individuals in this way after they have passed away. I believe that in such cases we honor more ourselves than honor them by remembering them. The Society of Investigative Dermatology has realized this and bestows its honors on men while they still can enjoy them.

I might add that I have had the great pleasure of talking to Dr. Beerman, and we discovered that we had had many friends in common. Many years ago he spent two summers at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole as a zoological investigator and I too spent two such summers there, immediately after him.

I would like to make one other comment about the honor of being the Herman Beerman Lecturer. I have the feeling that the Society likes to have its English in special accents. I notice that René Dubos was the first lecturer. And, of course, I imagine there was some French accent to it. I found that the second lecturer was Hans Selye, who has a good Austrian accent. Rupert Billingham was the third lecturer, and he has the very strange accent of a Britisher. And, finally, you have me here today with a German accent!

I must confess that I was puzzled at first when the invitation came to address you. I wondered what I, a general geneticist, could offer the members of the Society for Investigative Dermatology. But then I realized that much of my work in human genetics actually had its roots in dermatology. As an initial outsider I found my forays into aspects of dermatology fascinating and adventurous. When I came to choose a title for the Fourth Annual Herman Beerman Lecture I found that it was appropriate to tell you about "Adventures in Dermatological Genetics."